CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 22 January 2002, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed Tawfik (Egypt)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 889th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and the first part of its 2002 session.

Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset I should like to say how proud Egypt is to assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of this year's session and how proud I am to have been given this honour. It is a token of trust for which we are grateful and in which we take pride, particularly since it is the presidency in place at the beginning of the session which bears the major responsibility for trying to move the Conference's work forward.

I should also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference, and Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General, as well as the staff of the secretariat for the efficient and effective support they provide to the presidency in order to facilitate its task and the work of Conference generally. This will be very important for the success of this year's session.

I should like to begin the session by bidding farewell to those colleagues who have left the Conference since we adjourned in September, namely, Ambassador Carlos Amat Forés of Cuba, Ambassador Betancourt Ruales of Ecuador, Ambassador Ali Khorram of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco, Ambassador Vasily Sidorov of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Mercedes Rico of Spain. I would be remiss if I did not also mention my own former Ambassador, Ms. Fayza Aboulnaga, who is now a government minister. I do hope that the delegations concerned will convey to them our deep appreciation of the valuable contribution which they made to our work during their tenure. We wish them every success and happiness in their new assignments.

I take this opportunity to extend a welcome to the new ambassadors who have been appointed to represent their Governments in the Conference, namely, Ambassador Luiz Felipe Seixas Corrêa of Brazil, Ambassador Volker Heinsberg of Germany, Ambassador Mohammad Reza Alborzi of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco, Ambassador Leonid Skotnikov of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Carlos Miranda of Spain, Ambassador David Broucher of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Ambassador Eric Javits of the United States of America. I should like to take this opportunity to assure them of our full cooperation and support in their new assignments.

Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

I should also like to assure you that the Egyptian presidency is fully committed to revitalizing the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the only forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations. Over the years, the Conference has successfully concluded some key international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments constituting the foundation of the

(The President)

international community's work in this domain. The work of multilateral disarmament is particularly important because it helps to establish internationally agreed rules which have the necessary legitimacy to ensure that they apply, without discrimination, to all States and peoples, effectively helping to strengthen international peace and stability.

The international scene has witnessed fundamental changes since the adjournment of the Conference's last session, following the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. As the whole world was gripped by a feeling of shock and revulsion at these barbarous acts, in a few short hours there emerged an unprecedented manifestation of international solidarity against terrorism, which served to highlight the importance of achieving security for all peoples, without exception. Indeed, this international solidarity underscores the willingness of the international community to work together, earnestly and efficiently, to achieve that goal. This offers new opportunities for the disarmament process, which may allow us to overcome the paralysis which has beset the Conference on Disarmament for many years and prevented us even from beginning our substantive work; although some do feel that recent developments in the international security situation may adversely affect the entire international arms control and disarmament apparatus, of which the Conference on Disarmament is a fundamental part. There is no historic inevitability about whether these predictions will come true. The international strategic situation is in the process of being built and it is perfectly possible for States and groups to reach an understanding on disarmament. We can also affirm that the existence of obstacles to the Conference's work and the fact that it has been unable to respond to the appeals of the General Assembly and the 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference is not a definitive state of affairs, but one that can be remedied. We do have a real opportunity to revitalize the work of the Conference, so that it can assume its important responsibilities. This we can do.

In that regard, I should like to assure you that this presidency will do its utmost to reach agreement on a programme of work based on the efforts of previous Conference presidents, particularly the proposal put forward by Ambassador Amorim in document CD/1624. The proposal enjoyed the support of the Conference as a basis for further intensive consultations, by taking account of the opinions and proposals discussed last year in order to help us to reach agreement on a programme of work.

We are currently holding consultations on this subject and wish to hear all views, ideas and proposals as to ways of reconciling points of view, so that we can then embark on the substantive work of the Conference. All Member States in the Conference have a collective responsibility to agree on a programme of work and we hope that we will all demonstrate the utmost flexibility consistent with the legitimate security concerns of all States.

Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

If the work of the Conference on Disarmament were to be paralysed for another year confidence in the Conference would be undermined and its legitimacy eroded, just when all peoples throughout the world are longing for effective disarmament measures, particularly for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, and nuclear weapons in particular, which

(The President)

threaten mankind with nuclear annihilation. All peoples of the world wish to live in peace and security. It is their fundamental right and we cannot accept a situation in which this security is monopolized by certain States with huge arsenals of weapons of mass destruction.

According to the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, the accumulation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, today constitutes much more of a threat than a protection for the future of humankind. If that was true in 1978, when the document was first adopted, it is equally true today, as we stand at the beginning of a new century, in which we hope that mankind will take effective steps to preserve peace and stability for all.

As we start a new session of the Conference on Disarmament today, it is time for us to send a clear message that the path of disarmament is a humanitarian path which serves the interests of us all and the aspirations of all peoples. I am quite certain that each and every one of us in this room will do everything in our power to shoulder our responsibilities.

In conclusion, I urge you all to look beyond fixed positions and to focus on innovative ideas. As we begin the new year we are greatly in need of new ideas to tackle the well-known problems which have prevented the Conference from beginning its substantive work. We need a new spirit that is suited to the challenges of our age and the faith which the international community has placed in this august forum. I should like us to begin this year's work in a spirit of confidence in our common aims and abilities.

Thank you for your attention.

I should now like to call upon the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, to read us a message addressed to the Conference by Mr. Kofi Annan. I give the floor to Mr. Román-Morey.

Mr. ROMÁN-MOREY (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): I will now proceed to read the message sent by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan. I quote:

> "The events of 11 September 2001 and their aftermath have brought home to the world the uncomfortable fact that disarmament and non-proliferation remain unfinished business, and that there is an acute need to strengthen existing measures, explore new ones for halting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and step up concerted efforts to eliminate these weapons from arsenals altogether. Even more directly, those events reminded us that effective measures are needed - and need to be swiftly implemented - to eliminate the risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists.
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> "In the aftermath of the September attacks, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously reaffirmed multilateralism as a core principle in negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation. The Assembly also emphasized the need for

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament)

progress in multilateral cooperation on disarmament and non-proliferation, to contribute to global efforts against terrorism. It is my sincere hope that this Conference will respond to these challenges with dynamism and determination.

"Such a response requires a complete break with the recent prolonged inactivity of the Conference. The past year yet again saw lack of progress in multilateral disarmament efforts. The abrupt end of negotiations on a protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention undermined the subsequent Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, which was therefore suspended without agreement on a final declaration. The announcement of the withdrawal of the United States from the ABM Treaty, regarded for years as a cornerstone of strategic stability, raised concerns over the risk of a new nuclear arms race, a loss of credibility in the commitment to nuclear disarmament, a weaponization of outer space, and a tendency towards unilateral approaches to international arms issues. And despite the strong reaffirmation of international support for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty at the 2001 Conference to facilitate its entry into force, the Treaty has yet to take effect five years after being opened for signature.

"In spite of this stagnation, there have been some positive developments in the international arena:

- The substantial reduction in nuclear weapons announced by the United States is indeed welcome progress - but reductions mutually agreed by the major nuclear-weapon Powers would give the rest of the international community greater confidence in the irreversibility of those cuts;

- The Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted a programme of action, providing a blueprint for international and regional cooperation that may eventually lead to binding international norms; and

- The Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons expanded its scope of application to non-international armed conflicts and established mechanisms to address the issues of explosive remnants of war and mines other than anti-personnel mines.

"There were also some positive developments in your Conference itself. I welcome the movement in bridging the divergent views and interests of Member States on mechanisms to deal with two outstanding issues - nuclear disarmament, and prevention of an arms race in outer space - although there are still differences of opinion on the respective mandates. In this context, negotiations on banning the production of fissile material for weapon purposes are essential. I urge you to continue the consensus-building process with perseverance and determination.

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament)

"I hope that, as you embark on this new year, the events of 2001 will serve as a catalyst for the pursuit of new approaches to overcoming the stagnation in the Conference. I strongly believe that the representative membership of this Conference gives it the intellectual and political potential to overcome the current stalemate, and I trust you will use that potential to its fullest extent. I pledge the full cooperation of the United Nations in that endeavour, and wish you a productive session."

That is the end of the message, Mr. President. While I have the floor, I would like to make a few remarks on some organizational issues concerning the Conference on Disarmament.

As in previous years, the Conference has at its disposal 10 meetings per week. This means that, throughout its session, the Conference can hold two meetings daily, with full services. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to you to make the best possible use of the resources allocated to the Conference. In particular, it is important that meetings start punctually and that they are not extended beyond the allocated time. Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that meetings with full services cannot be held in the evenings or during weekends.

As usual, the Conference will have at its disposal the Council Chamber, Room I, Room C-108 and the secretariat conference room on the sixth floor. If required, an additional conference room may also be provided upon request. When such facilities are needed for consultations or other meetings, delegations are kindly requested to make reservations in advance through the secretariat.

With regard to documentation, since the capacity of the language services is stretched to its limits, the measures already observed by the Conference concerning the most rational and economical issuance and the use of documentation need to be continued. In particular, all documents need to be presented well in advance and duplication of documentation should be avoided. In order to avoid the translation of the same document twice, delegations are kindly requested to inform the secretariat of any case of the submission of the same document for issuance both to the Conference on Disarmament and to the General Assembly. Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that the United Nations regulations do not permit the publication of statements delivered by delegations in plenary meetings as separate documents of the Conference, since they are always reproduced in the verbatim records and are, ipso facto, part of the official documentation of the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that I can count on your full cooperation in exercising the necessary restraint, whenever possible, with regard to documentation.

I would also like to recall that, as part of the secretariat's efforts to reduce operating costs, only documents containing draft proposals which require action will be circulated in meeting rooms. Pre-session and reference documents will continue to be supplied to the Permanent Missions of Member States and of Observer States. Therefore, delegations are kindly requested to keep the copies they receive throughout the annual session and use them during the meetings. Nevertheless, a limited number of copies will be available from the documents distribution counter in room C-111, just opposite the Council Chamber.

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament)

Finally, I would like to remind delegations to send to the secretariat of the Conference their respective letters of accreditation as soon as possible, in order to expedite the issuance of passes granting access to the conference rooms, as well as the publication of the list of participants. For security reasons, delegations are kindly requested to carry with them their Conference on Disarmament passes or, at least, their identification provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank Mr. Román-Morey for delivering the message addressed to us by Mr. Kofi Annan and for the information he has provided to us. I should like to ask Mr. Román-Morey to convey to the Secretary-General of the United Nations our appreciation for his contribution and the importance he attaches to our work.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has also sent me a communication transmitting all the resolutions on disarmament and international security matters adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, including those addressing specific requests to the Conference. The secretariat has distributed this in document CD/1660. Does any delegation wish to make a statement at this stage?

As that seems not to be the case, I invite the Conference to consider, in an informal plenary meeting, the draft agenda for the 2002 session as contained in document CD/WP.523, as well as the requests from States not members of the Conference on Disarmament to participate in our work during this session, as contained in document CD/WP.522. Both of these documents have been circulated by the secretariat. Thereafter, we shall resume the plenary meeting in order to formalize the agreements reached at the informal plenary.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

As I have just announced, I shall suspend the plenary meeting and the informal meeting to consider the draft agenda for the 2002 session and the requests received from non-member States to participate in our work will follow immediately. This meeting is restricted to the members of the Conference.

The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): The 889th plenary meeting is now resumed.

In accordance with the agreement reached earlier, at the informal plenary meeting, may I take it that the Conference decides to adopt for its 2002 session the agenda contained in document CD/WP.523, which is before you.

Does anyone have any comments?

(The President)

In the absence of any comments, I will take it that the agenda is adopted.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): The agenda will be issued as an official document of the Conference by the secretariat.

In connection with the adoption of the agenda, I, as the President of the Conference, should like to state that it is my understanding that, if there is a consensus in the Conference to deal with any issues, they could be dealt with within this agenda.

I have been informed that the delegation of Pakistan has asked for the floor at this stage. Mr. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, at the outset of this annual session for 2002, the delegation of Pakistan would like to congratulate you and the brotherly country of Egypt on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the spirit of the excellent relations which exist between our two fraternal countries.

Mr. President, your presence in the chair is a testimony of the absence of Her Excellency Ambassador and now Minister Fayza Aboulnaga, a dear colleague and friend who is sorely missed here in Geneva by many of her friends, but whose imprint on the work of this Conference and other international forums will continue to be felt. We ask you to convey to her our best wishes for success in the future.

Let me also take this opportunity to express farewell to so many of our dear colleagues who have left the Conference on Disarmament and Geneva and taken up other assignments. I would also like to welcome our new colleagues, the distinguished Ambassadors of Brazil, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Morocco, the Russian Federation, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Mr. President, as stated in the message of the United Nations Secretary-General which has just been read to us, the global strategic scenario has been substantially transformed in the recent past. Yet our Conference is only able, owing to the constraints with which it is confronted, to adopt an agenda which is now several decades old. One of the new elements in this strategic scenario is the issue of missiles - missiles in all their aspects. In its resolution 56/24 B, in preambular paragraph 4, the United Nations General Assembly states that it is "convinced of the need for a comprehensive approach towards missiles, in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, as a contribution to international peace and security". My delegation believes that this issue - the issue of missiles, including anti-missile systems - is one which requires careful consideration and possible negotiations for a regime capable of establishing international and regional stability and security in this regard.

(Mr. Akram Pakistan)

Second, the United Nations General Assembly has also adopted, year after year, two resolutions dealing with regional disarmament. At its last session, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 56/24 H, which, in paragraph 2, affirms that "global and regional approaches to disarmament complement each other and should therefore be pursued simultaneously to promote regional and international peace and security". Resolution 56/24 I is still more specific: in paragraph 2 the Assembly "requests the Conference on Disarmament to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control, and looks forward to a report of the Conference on this subject". My delegation believes that the Conference should respond to these recommendations and conclusions of the General Assembly.

Mr. President, in the light of your statement that any item not reflected on the agenda could be accommodated if there is a consensus in the work programme of this Conference, my delegation has gone along with the adoption of the agenda as it has been proposed. We would, however, reserve the right to raise these proposals for consideration in this Conference in the context of our discussions on the work programme.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I shall, of course, convey your compliments to the Minister, Ms. Fayza Aboulnaga.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I now call on the Ambassador of Turkey.

Mr. SUNGAR (Turkey): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation has the privilege of speaking under your presidency, may I take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to you and assure you of the Turkish delegation's full support in the performance of your functions and in the pursuit of what we hope will be a productive and forward-looking session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me also use this occasion to welcome warmly distinguished colleagues from Brazil, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. No doubt at this critical juncture we could use new vigour, creativity and energy to overcome the obstacles before us, which seem to be hardening by the year.

The 11 September terror attacks on the United States and the emergence of the bioterrorism during its aftermath have profoundly affected international political priorities, the global security agenda and the strategic landscape. These attacks have exposed our vulnerability as members of the international community. Whether we will be able to change the world for better or for worst will depend, however, on what lessons we are going to draw from these tragic experiences. From the point of view of the Conference on Disarmament the attacks demonstrated the relevance of disarmament and arms control. We are all duty-bound not to let any group, terrorist or otherwise, whatever their ideology or orientation, get their hands on any type of material which could be used as an ingredient of a weapon of mass destruction.

(Mr. Sungar, Turkey)

11 September and the ensuing developments have clearly demonstrated the urgent need for a concerted effort to eradicate weapons of mass destruction and to close any loopholes in the already existing disarmament regimes. We think that it is also high time for the Conference on Disarmament to live up to new challenges and meet the expectations of international public opinion.

The Conference on Disarmament is under keen scrutiny. We have to justify our existence. We can only do this by being productive. We cannot keep the engine running at idle and we cannot let the valuable intellectual and material resources so generously provided to us go to waste. In our deliberations we have to be mindful of possible strong criticism from the international community if, for another year, we fail to agree on a work programme as a result of inflexibility in our approach.

On a positive note, Mr. President, last year, we appointed three special coordinators, namely Ambassador Petko Draganov of Bulgaria on the expansion of the membership of the Conference, Ambassador Günther Seibert of Germany on the review of the agenda of the Conference and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. This delegation would like to commend the distinguished Ambassadors for their tireless efforts to break the stalemate. For this year we agreed that, while priority should be given to pursuing substantive work, new special coordinators on these issues would be reappointed as early as possible.

Conscious of our collective responsibility, my delegation is ready to start afresh on the work of the Conference on Disarmament and to tackle the obstacles that face us with a renewed sense of urgency.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? If not, I should now like to invite the Conference to take a decision on the requests received from States not members of the Conference to participate in our work. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.522 and were received from the following States: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Gabon, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Holy See, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Monaco, Oman, Portugal, Qatar, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sudan and Thailand.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): On the list of speakers for today I have Ambassador Leonid Skotnikov of the Russian Federation. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. SKOTNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, as we commence the current annual session of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like first of all to congratulate you on your assumption of the important post of president and to assure you of the full support of the Russian delegation. I would also like to express our thanks for the words of welcome extended to me as a newcomer to the Conference and to convey my own greeting to all colleagues and to assure them of my full cooperation with them.

As we enter the new century, the vital need to build a world order based on equal security, common responsibility and cooperation among all States is becoming increasingly clear. Only thus, by combining the efforts of the entire international community, can we provide a response to the global challenges, threats and risks facing an increasingly interdependent, but - unfortunately - still highly vulnerable world. Much remains to be done to achieve this, including ridding ourselves once and for all of the decades-long heritage of nuclear standoff and global confrontation.

2001 was a testing time for the multi lateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime processes. Despite the intensive efforts that were made, any weighing of the losses and failures against the modest successes offer scant consolation. In the main this was because the collective approach was thwarted by unilateralism. Doubt was cast upon the effectiveness of multilateral efforts in an area where fundamental national security interests come together - and where they may be reconciled. As an example of this we may take the situation surrounding the ABM Treaty, an instrument which for decades really made it possible to restrain the arms race. Clouds have also gathered over the CTBT. We have seen people backing away from some of the decisions taken by the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The principle of the irreversibility of nuclear disarmament has been eroded. We have seen the torpedoing of many years of work on the Protocol to the BWC and the success of the CCW Review Conference at the end of the year could hardly be seen to improve the overall gloomy picture in the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation process.

The shock of 11 September 2001 helped us to realize the full horror of the threat posed by international terrorism to humankind. Long before those tragic events the Russian Federation had warned of the deadly danger harboured by the "Terrorist International" and had called for the establishment of a common anti-terrorist front: witness our immediate and full support for the anti-terrorist coalition, whose formation merely confirmed the lack of any alternative to multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in resolving security issues in the twenty-first century.

The essence, the core of a multilateral approach to ensuring international security and to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament lies in the fact one's own security cannot be guaranteed at the expense of another's. This is the leitmotif which informs Russia's approach to our work here in the Conference on Disarmament, and it is precisely on these convictions that we have built and will continue to build our work here in the Conference. We hope that in 2002 this unique negotiating forum will prove equal to the tasks which face it.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

Last year Russia continued, through its actions, to demonstrate its resolve, based on the tried and tested bilateral and multilateral agreements, to pursue the quest for further cuts in missile and nuclear forces. Thus, in December 2001, the period set in the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I) for reductions in strategic offensive armaments expired. The Russian Federation had in fact reduced the number of deployed strategic carriers - ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers - to 1,136 units and the number of weapons on board them to 5,518 units, in other words, to levels well below those provided for in the Treaty. In May 2001 we saw the completion of the 13-year inspection activities in implementation of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF). In summary two entire classes of nuclear missiles, with ranges of, respectively, 500-1,000 and 1,000-5,500 kilometres, were eliminated from our arsenals. At the end of October, in accordance with a decision taken by the presidents of Russia, the United States and Ukraine dated 14 January 1994, the last nuclear weapon removed from Ukrainian territory was destroyed.

In this endeavour, we continue to insist that the nuclear disarmament process must be speeded up and strategic stability must be consolidated.

We have repeatedly stated our position on further reductions in strategic offensive arms: these must, first of all, be drastic, second, verifiable, third irreversible. That is to say, strategic offensive weapons must not merely be reduced on paper. We have implemented START I; we have ratified START II. Furthermore, we have submitted to the United States a draft START III. It is no fault of Russia that START II has not entered into force.

Particular attention should be given to the decision by the United States to withdraw unilaterally from the ABM Treaty. The President of the Russian Federation has already stated his view that this step was a big mistake. In addition, we cannot but agree with the assessment of the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, contained in the address to our Conference which has just been read to us by his representative.

We have always emphasized that the issues of strategic stability and the ABM Treaty go far beyond the mere bounds of Russian-American relations. All these problems have a global dimension. They directly affect international stability and security, a circumstance which was confirmed in the adoption by the General Assembly - by an overwhelming majority of votes - of a resolution in defence of the ABM Treaty. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those delegations which, for the last three years, have supported this resolution.

As we see it, the decision by the United States to withdraw from the Treaty is not guided by any wish to find ways of responding to a real missile threat. This decision reflects a certain approach, a unilateral approach, which runs counter to the security interests of other countries and of the international community as a whole. We would like to express the hope that,

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

following their action on the ABM Treaty, the United States will not act in a similar manner with other arms control and disarmament agreements. We would like to count on the continued application of the positive experience which has been accumulated in international security over the last few decades. All this must be preserved and built upon as the foundation for continued constructive and purposeful dialogue.

We are convinced that the problem of missile proliferation can and must be resolved without demolishing the existing strategic stability architecture. As a counterweight to attempts to introduce a military solution to problems - something which can only aggravate the situation, we propose a different approach: political and diplomatic measures, plus the Russian initiatives on a global control system. We are ready to engage in the broadest possible consultations, on a non-discriminatory basis with all interested countries, on the whole range of missile non-proliferation issues.

We consider that negotiations on sweeping reductions in strategic offensive weapons must be continued. Back in November 2000, President Putin announced the levels of warheads that we would be prepared to accept - namely, 1,500 and less. It is very significant that, during the visit of President Putin to the United States of America, the American administration made clear its own position, as between 1,700 and 2,200 nuclear units.

We are keen on achieving legally binding agreements in this area and, in this regard, we are working on the premise that offensive and defensive systems are interrelated - an interrelationship confirmed by the presidents of Russia and the United States at their meeting in Ljubljana. The Russian Federation will do everything within its power to achieve agreement on this matter. This would have as its result the breakthrough in nuclear disarmament that is so badly needed.

While working on the bilateral track we intend to continue and to diversify our multilateral efforts. Here I would like to recall our proposal that the permanent members of the Security Council set up a standing consultative process on nuclear disarmament and strategic stability. We believe also that we should do our utmost to promote measures within the NPT review process. In particular, we are preparing for serious work in April 2002 at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

With regard to the decision taken by the United States to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, we are extremely concerned at what is probably the most negative of all the possible consequences of such a step, namely, the spread of the arms race to outer space. Prevention of that scenario remains one of our main priorities and represents an issue of concern to the entire international community. That concern was eloquently expressed in the message to the conference held in Moscow in April 2001 on the theme: "Weapon-free outer space - an arena for peaceful cooperation in the twenty-first century" by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

In his message Mr. Annan said: "We must guard against the misuse of outer space and, in particular, against the creation of an arms race in outer space. The international community recognized early on that a legal regime for outer space was needed to prevent it from becoming another arena of military confrontation."

The desire of the international community to take effective steps to prevent weapons entering space was confirmed in resolution 56/23 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session and supported by 156 States and opposed by none.

In this connection I would like to draw the attention of Conference participants to the proposals made at the General Assembly by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ivanov, on possible elements which might serve as a basis for a comprehensive agreement on the non-deployment of weapons in outer space. An important component of that Russian initiative is the proposal to place a moratorium on the deployment in space of any means of warfare, pending agreement on that issue by the international community. Russia would be ready to enter without delay into such a commitment, provided that other leading space Powers also joined the moratorium.

The Russian delegation would like to see the launching of intensive negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) here in the Conference on Disarmament. In this context it is our belief that painstaking and systematic work has already been carried out on this matter over a period of some 10 years, between 1985 and 1994, in the relevant ad hoc committee. Many useful initiatives and proposals have already been advanced and these, in our view, should also be taken into account in the future. Recently new ideas have come to the fore. Thus, we support the specific proposals by the delegation of China, set forth in the Conference's working document entitled: "Possible elements of the future international legal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space". We take a positive view of the groundwork done by Canada on the non-deployment of weapons in outer space; the French ideas on a notification regime for the launching of space objects and ballistic missiles; and other proposals made by members of our Conference.

We reaffirm our commitment to common efforts to seek compromise on the Conference's programme of work. In 2001 the Russian delegation submitted a package proposal on the subject, providing for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to consider nuclear disarmament issues with the simultaneous establishment of an ad hoc committee on PAROS with a negotiating mandate. As we see it, our package responds to the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of members of the Conference. We are grateful to all those delegations which reacted constructively to our initiative. We are ready to engage in further dialogue to improve our proposals and are convinced that, if we make sufficient joint efforts, we will finally manage to launch substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

We support the commencement of work on a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear devices (FMCT). In this connection we would like to see the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate and without linkages to any other issues. As our discussions proceed on the issue of the programme of work, we will comment in greater detail on other items of our agenda.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

As there appears to be no other delegation that wishes to take the floor, we have concluded our work for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 24 January 2002, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.